

solutions where education is concerned.

This testing provision is helpful, it is a useful tool to begin to compare government-owned schools versus a different government-owned school, or maybe a government-owned system versus a private system and so on, but none of that matters until we get choice. This tax credit provision that we proposed, it provides choice in two areas: One, it gives greater liberty to the student as a consumer; and it gives greater liberty to the taxpayer as an investor.

It runs, in principle, with the government system. It is just an alternative model, a different model, and something that I believe can have revolutionary, positive consequences for America's schoolchildren.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. It also gives a great liberty to our public school system, because what it does in our State of Michigan, basically, our public school superintendents who care passionately about the kids in their districts have become beggars to Lansing, our State capital, to get the money to flow into their districts. They are always going to Lansing to get the money.

What this now really does, it empowers them, because so many of the schools in my district have such a loyalty from their constituents and their parents and the kids, but there is no effective way for these people in these communities to put more money into their public schools.

Tax credits will enable them to do that so that, again, there will be some more balance in the system so that these public school superintendents will be able to get some of their money from Lansing, but when they are doing a great job and their test scores come in and say, man, look at how we are doing, in our district some of the public school students have gone to the military academies, and they go there and they are in the top 10 percent of their class at the military academies.

When people see that kind of performance, they are going to say, I am willing to give more money to that superintendent because he or she is doing a great job for our kids, and I think they are going to spend that money wisely.

So it gives a tremendous degree of flexibility, like the gentleman said, to the parents, to the kids, to the taxpayers, but also to the traditional public school system. This should not threaten them because it really will enable them to enhance their relationship with their community and enhance their education programs to take those schools to the next level, as well.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Money follows freedom. That is true almost no matter what we are talking about, whether we are talking about the leadership of countries. If we look around the world, those countries that have a heavy, autocratic, bureaucratic system of rules and no property rights, they have

a very difficult time keeping their economies afloat. Those countries that have made the reforms toward property ownership, toward real liberty and freedom for their citizens begin to see capital being created within those countries.

Here in the United States, our capitalist system of competition and freedom has resulted in wealth creation beyond anyone's wildest dreams, and in the history of human civilization. The same is true in education. If we can begin to cut the strings and the red tape and the restrictions that are associated with school money, we will see more of it generated, and that is our goal.

The current system, for all the things that people see in that as beneficial, the fact remains that at the end of the day, for every dollar spent, approximately 60 cents makes it to a child. What we are talking about is a freedom-based model of education tax credits wherein, under our proposal, for every dollar that it costs the government, \$2 makes it to a child.

We do not have to be rocket scientists to figure out this is a great bargain for the government, a great bargain for the taxpayer, and it is a better bargain for the student.

For the teacher in the middle of all of this, today they are not treated like professionals; I hate to say it. We expect a lot of them, we call them professionals, but the reality is, the worst teacher in a district in a public school model gets paid the same and on the same terms as the best teacher in a district.

What kind of incentive is that for good teachers, when they see the lazy teacher that is not that committed or maybe burned out? And they are the exception, not the rule, but they exist. But when you see these kinds of teachers that I am describing leaving the school when the bell rings, and yet getting the same pay raise on the same pay scale, it does not take more than 4 or 5 years for a good, hard-working teacher to get burned out on that. It is not a motivating factor.

Education freedom through education tax credits begins to allow teachers to be teaching like the professionals they are, too. If they are attracting students, if they are attracting customers, cash will begin to follow that, and these teachers will begin to be paid according to the professional scale I think they deserve.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I think it holds great opportunity. It is not a perfect system, and it is not going to fix it by itself. Tax credits are not going to reform the system. But when you can combine the tax credits with H.R. 1, more parental choice, cutting some of the rules and regulations out of the bureaucratic model so that, again, more than a dollar or more than 60 cents can make it into a local school, when we start combining all of those things and we can really get some dynamic or exciting form in all of our schools for all

of our kids to make sure our kids are the best-educated kids in the world, that is the goal that we should have.

Until we reach that goal and that objective, we should not stop working.

Mr. SCHAFFER. I spoke to a group of different organizations just this morning about this issue of education tax credits. There were taxpayer organizations there, family organizations, church groups, synagogues represented. It was just a number of organizations that care about education, and they are here in Washington. There must have been about 100 people in the room. They were all very enthusiastic about the proposal. They want to help. They are writing letters to congressmen and making phone calls to the people that they know here.

I think it is important for our colleagues and anyone else who may be monitoring tonight's proceedings to know that this is a very real proposal. It is in play. We do need the voices of Americans to raise up and rally around this education tax credit bill. It is not introduced yet; it will be introduced in a couple of weeks.

I think it is really important for all of us to contact our colleagues here in the Congress, particularly those who serve on the Committee on Ways and Means and in our leadership, and voice in the strongest terms possible support for this freedom-based tax credit proposal to help children and to get it passed.

We need that kind of support and that kind of a campaign around this proposal now, and this special order is just one part of trying to accomplish that. For that, Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for your indulgence in recognizing us tonight. We will be back in 2 weeks to talk about the same topic again.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. LIPINSKI (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today after 6:00 p.m. on account of a family matter.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for the week of May 20 on account of personal reasons.

Mrs. EMERSON (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of a death in the family.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. TURNER) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. BROWN of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.